
COL. DANIEL CLAUS MEMORANDA

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Memorandum of the Rebel Invasion of Canada in 1775

“In the beginning of May, 75, Col. Allen took Tiyondarogon Garrison by surprize after mid-night, and immediately prepared crossing Lake Champlain in Batteaux in Quest of the Kings Vessel, and finding she had got to St. Johns proceeded with abt. 150 Men to that place garrison'd by a Serjeants party and landed out of sight of the place, his party consisting mostly of the Inhabitants about Lake Champlain, that had a daily Intercourse with the people at St. Johns, they gradually entered the place as it were accidentally without being suspected (the taking of Tiyondarogo or other Disturbances abt. Boston & the colonies not being known or heard of there;) till they took an opportunity of surrounding the chief part of the Garrison without their Barracks, then securing the rest & their Arms within, and seized the King's Sloop layng at the Wharff. One of the Soldiers, however made his escape to Montreal and carried the News to Lt.-Col. Templer of 26. Regt. who sent off a party with a field piece to St. Johns, and would have surprized the Rebels and taken them prisonrs. had not one Benton a Mercht of Montreal got to St. Johns before the party and apprized them of it and they were not out of Canon Shot when the troops arrived at St. Johns being luckily favored with a fair wind to carry them over the Lake to Tiyondarogon. This Expedition to St. Johns happened abt. the middle of May. The Rebels then in the course of June sent Reinforcements, and Provision & Ammunition to Tiyondarogo, and having intercepted the Returns of the few Troops left in Canada, and be-

ing in Possession of all the Vessels & Crafts in Lake Champlain set their Invasion of Canada on Foot, constructing Batteaux & making other preparations.

On the 1st of June I left my House on the Mohawk River to proceed to Canada by way of Oswego (:a great round abt. the communication by Lakes George & Champlain being cut off by the Rebels:) & at the same time assisting Col. Johnston to assemble the six nation Indians and apprise them of the Rebels proceedings; arrived abt. the middle of July at Aughquisasne or St. Regis an Iroquois Town on the River St. Lawrence, and summoned those Indians to a Congress at Caghnawagey alias Sault St. Louis the Fire or Council place of the Indian Nations in Canada, when I arrived the 17th July, Col. Johnson brought some of the Six Nations with him, and proceeded immediately to Montreal. I remained opposite Caghnawagey to meet and confer with those nations, upon the then situation of Affairs, and they being summoned they immediately attended, and expressed their great satisfaction of seeing me, then related to me all that had happened since the affair at St. Johns in May and what consternation and Alarm the Rebels occasioned in Canada, and the fear'd Defection of the Canadians on Acct. of the defenceless state of the country. That the Governor sent for them and desired as their assistance to have a look out & watch the motions of the Rebels who were expected to pay another Visit soon in Canada. They replied that this being an Affair of Moment & a Surprize to them, they must first consult upon it. being strangers to the Nature of the Dispute between the King and his Children the Colonists and in short were at a Loss how to act, that at our taking of Canada in 1760. they were desired and treated with to consider the Kings english subjects as their friends & Brothers for the future forgetting all former Hatred agst them, which they then promised and hitherto fulfilled. Now they are desired to act agst them. when the Inhabitants of the Country who had more reason to do so were so backward & defected, a thing they could not so easy determine upon. At which they said the Governor seemed to be displeased & angry acquainting them

that in case of their persisting in their Denial they must expect having their Lands taken from them and be deprived of other priviledges they enjoyed. They answered that if their Lives were at stake, they could not rashly & inconsiderately enter into a War the nature of which they were unacquainted with that they considered themselves independent & free agents in that Respect, and could say no more abt it, & so the Meeting broke up.

They therefore repeated agn they were very happy at my arrival, and begd & entreated me to give them a full acct of this extraordinary & unexpected Dispute—Accordingly I begun with the original settling of the Colonies Governments care Indulgence & protection of them, at an immense Expense to the British Nation, some of which instances they themselves were sensible of, vigt. their protection from becoming French subjects in the Beginning of the late War, and the consequent Conquest of Canada by the British Arms only wch secured to them peace and Tranquility after many years War & Troubles. I then recounted to them the Colonists particularly ye New Englandrs most ungratefull Returns for these Favours & Blessings from the time of the Stamp Act to the destroying of ye Tea at Boston. The necessity of Government sending an Armament to enforce the Laws of the Kingdom, the New Englandrs insulting the Troops, and becoming the Aggressors at Lexington, their unwarrantable & rebellious Invasion of Canada a Country not in the least concerned in the Dispute; their being then in possession of the Territory abt Lake Champlain wch his Majesty allotted them for Hunting & fishing the Danger of their losing those Means of their Subsistance in Case the Rebels should get footing there; Their ill usage of the Indians in general & stripping them of all their Lands if not guarded against by the Crown; the striking example of their own people living among the Colonists some of whom they made slaves & servants of & got their Lands from them in a fraudulent manner, which would be the case with all Indians should they become the Rulers of the Continent of America, with several other touching arguments on

the subject. With which they were so struck and roused that immediately they determined of attacking & laying waste the New England Frontiers. I advised them to declare first their Sentiments to Sir Guy Carleton at the public meeting to be held at Montreal in a few days, and that I was of opinion they ought first to warn the New Englandrs off their Territory at Crownpoint & Tiyondarogon, and if they refused to acquaint them with their Resolutions.

Accordingly in the Beginning of August a Congress of upwards of 1500 Indians including abt 600 Warriors took place at Montreal, when the Indians in public Council made the above offers & proposals to Sir Guy Carleton. who in his answer thanks them for their good Will, but did not approve at all of the scheme. That all he wanted and desired of them was to keep a party of 40 or 50 of their young Men at St. Johns to have a Lookout from that Garrison & watch the Motions of the Rebels at Crownpoint, but they were not to go beyond the Line of the Province of Quebec. After this Meeting Sir Guy Carleton went to Quebec wch was towards the middle of August. The Indians were something disgusted at their offer being rejected, however they kept such a party of abt 50 of their Warriors at St. Johns, who were attended by two Indian Officers, made several Discoveries, killed one Capt. Baker & wounded some of his party, in the Capt's. side pockets were found his journal & other papers relative to his Discoveries abt St. Johns & Chamblee.

About the Beginning of Sepr a Relief of Indians was sent to St. Johns and before the relieved party came away, the News was brought that the Rebel Army was in Sight, upon wch Majr Preston ordered the Indian Officer with all the Indians to march out of the Fort and meet the Rebels without any other White Man, accordingly they came up with the Rebels abt $1\frac{1}{2}$ from the Fort on the West shore who were landing & partly landed, the Indians attacked them with all the Advantage they could the Rebels being abt 10 to 1. Indns made them give way at two diff't. times and at last obliged them to retreat to the Isle aux Noix .15 miles

from St. Johns. The Indians had 8 killed & some wounded, and the Rebels twas thought upwards a hundred they carrying off their Dead in their boats the works at St. Johns on the side where the Rebe's landed not being finished they must have soon carried the place and Montreal & Quebec being unguarded & open must have made an easy conquest.

General Schuyler who must have commanded that Expedition fell sick after the Repulse and returned home when the command devolved on Genl. Montgomery, who after this Defeat sent very threatening messages to Caghnawagey (the nearest Indian Town to his Army & no River to cross from where he was to attack their Town:) acquainting them with his Displeasure at their late enemical Behaviour at St. Johns against him; their being the most numerous Nation in the Attack and desiring their sending Deputies to him at the Isle aux Noix immediately otherwise they would march against their Town burn it & destroy their families. The Caghnawagey Indns were much alarmed at these messages seeing themselves exposed to the Resentment of the Rebels and no appearance of protection from Government and the disaffected Behaviour of the Canadians, and being left in the lurch by the Troops, when they attacked the Rebels at their Landing had no Resource or Means left to extricate themselves from obeying the summons & saw themselves obliged to send Deputies with great Dread & Fear of ill Treatment. However on their arrival at ye Isle aux Noix they were well reced by Mr. Montgomery, who upbraided them at the same time for interfering in a Dispute they had no Business with and hoped they would not do so for the future, that as he did want the Assistance of any Indians & it was to be supposed so powerful a prince as the King of England did not want the help of Savages. In the mean while he kept these Deputies of the Caghnawageys by Way of Hostages until their People were removed from St. Johns making them a present of 1000 Dollars then proceeded with his Army to invest St. Johns a second time which was about the 20th of September and succeeded, however the Garrison had time to prepare themselves since the

first Attempt, and he was obliged to besiege it regularly, after this the Caghnowagey Inds were stigmatize as Traitors, altho they repeatedly offered to join any Body of Troops or Canadians that should be sent to raise the Siege at St. Johns and being one day informed of such a party to be sent, they in a Body went to meet them at la prairie but finding a false Report they returned home.

About the latter end of Sept. Col. Allen Attempted with abt 200 Men to take Montreal by a Coup de Main, but being met by a Body of Troops & Canadians they were dispersed, some killed & wounded Allen was pursued by two young Indn Officers a few Rangers and Indians and taken prisn with a party of his best Men, After this Affair the Canadians came to Montreal under an appearance to lend their services, they were armed, accoutred &c. and ordered to be ready when called upon but many of them disappeared. Towards the middle of October the Rebels having exhausted their Ammunition & provisions, planned the Taking of Chamblee Garrison, well stockd with these Articles. Its to be remarked that after St. Johns was invested that post could be of no service to the former, but would have added great Strength to our Troops at the Sorell or Montreal. Accordingly the Rebels tempted with so valuable Acquisition and at so little Risque, the place being defenceless agst Artillery brought two light pieces of Iron Canon thro the woods out of reach of St. Johns fort and soon made a Breach into the thin Walls of Chamblee so that Mgr Stopford who commanded, saw himself obliged to surrender with his Garrison where the Rebels found upwards 100 Barrls of Powder & Shot in proportn & 200 Barls of Provisns by which means they were enabled to take St. Johns. Otherways by their own Confession must have quitted Canada, having but a few Rounds of Ammunition & very little provn left. The Rebels were fortunate enough at the Beginning of the Siege to take a parcell of Provisions & Cloths intended to be thrown into St. Johns for the Troops, wch Articles they much wanted at that season. The latter end of October Sir Guy Carleton made an attempt to relieve the Garrison at

St. Johns and endeavoured to cross at Longueil with a Body of Canadians & Indians but the former seemingly could not be depended upon, and the latter thereby drew the Rebels upon them only lost their chief Warrior & others wounded & taken, the effort proved abortive and St. Johns was obliged to surrender for want of succour & provision the beginning of Novr and soon after Montreal. Its to be observed that after the Rebels Repulse from St. Johns by the Indians Montreal & Quebec were put in as good a State of Defence as the Time would permit; Several armed Shipping arrived at the latter & Capt. Hamilton in the Lizard the 9th Novr. The 11 of Novr I embarked for Europe.

DANL. CLAUS,
late Agt. for Indn. Affrs,
Provce Quebec.

Endorsed:—Memorandums of the
Rebel Invasion of Canada
in 1775.

By Colo Claus.